

Letter from Alexander Graham Bell to Gardiner Greene Hubbard, December 20, 1891

Copy Beinn Bhreagh, Cape Breton Island. December 20th.1891. Dear Mr. Hubbard;

Thanks for two notes received. I will not deliver up the papers Mabel signed until you direct me to do so.

In re. Senator Walcott.

We want to sell the Laboratory lot on Conn. Avenue just as soon as a purchaser appears. I would like to oblige Senator Walcott but cannot advise doing anything that would interfere with the sale of the property at a moments notice. A lease is out of the question — nor would it do to allow the Senator the free use of the lot pending its sale — as we want to sell it immediately, and can give him no guarantee of possession. It would never do to allow him to lay out money upon the place on the strength of permission to use the lot until we find a purchaser. This would certainly fetter us. We must keep the property free to be sold at a moments notice. Please explain this to the Senator from me. Perhaps Senator Walcott might like to become the purchaser himself. If we could sell the property now — we should be willing to accept a very moderate return upon the capital invested — rather than hold on indefinitely for higher prices.

We have already had the lot graded ones over as Charlie directed, but if you think further grading would improve its saleability, I should like to have it done— as you think best.

And now in regard to Major Powell's farm &c. I should like very much to join you in purchasing it for him, but I can't see how — in justice to Mabel — I can do it. Our expenses this year have been unusually great on account of the Sander's investment, the Plaster Co. Elsie's illness and the improvements upon our property here. On 2 account of these

Library of Congress

things we are forced to commence the new year with a deficit which I have determined shall be made up by curtailment of expenses in the ensuing year, rather than by sacrifice of capital.

Poor Mabel has never yet had the full benefit of her income. What with Science and Moxee — Deaf-mutes and Plaster — Elsie and Mr. Sanders — Beinn Bhreagh — the laboratory — and the four nipped sheep &c. &c. &c. — money has melted — and it has been difficult to make both ends meet.

Now that Science is off our hands — we should be able to do very well — if we could only avoid making investments for the benefit of friends — that yield us no income. The great trouble is — It is so hard to say NO to propositions of this character. I have just been making good resolutions for the ensuing year — and now you tempt me to break them. I would do a great deal for Major Powell— and you touch me in a very tender place when you suggest my helping him.

If I could sell Moxee, Sanders' or Plaster Stock, or the Laboratory Lot on Conn. Avenue — I would be only too happy to contribute \$1250. as you suggest. I don't think it right however to take the money from income, or from interest bearing capital. I feel very badly about the matter, for there is no one I would more like to extend a helping hand to — than to the Major himself.

Your loving son, (Signed) Alexander Graham Bell. Hon. G. G. Hubbard. Washington, D. C.